

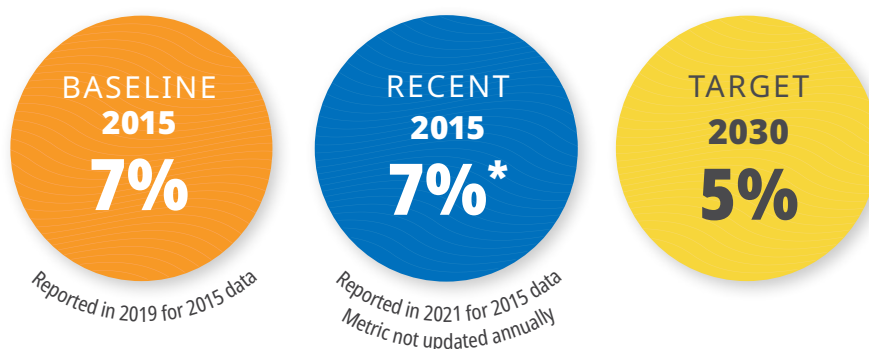
**WHAT RESULT DO WE WANT?**

All people in North Carolina have equitable access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate foods.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

- Access to foods that support healthy eating patterns contributes to an individual's health throughout his or her life.
- Healthy eating habits include controlling calories; eating a variety of foods and beverages from all the food groups; and limiting intake of saturated and trans fats, added sugars, and sodium. Healthy eating can help lower the risk for chronic disease.
- Evidence also shows that poor nutrition and an unhealthy diet are risk factors for high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer. According to the 2015—2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, healthy eating patterns include: a variety of vegetables; fruits, especially whole fruits; grains, at least half of which are whole grains; fat-free or low-fat dairy; protein foods, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), unsalted nuts and seeds, and soy products; and oils.
- Some research has shown that increased access to healthy foods corresponds with healthier dietary practices.

Source: Healthy People 2030<sup>1-10</sup>

**BASELINE DATA FROM HNC 2030****HOW ARE WE DOING?**

- The *HNC 2030* target seeks to decrease limited access to healthy foods from 7% to 5% by 2030.
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps discontinued this metric in 2020 making it not appropriate for measuring progress.
- The food environment index replaces the limited access to healthy foods metric. (<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2021/measure/factors/133/data>).

**HNC 2030 HEADLINE INDICATOR:****Percent of people with limited access to healthy foods**

The data are derived from the 2015 US Department of Agriculture and was reported in the Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings (CHR). This measure is no longer ranked at CHR and has been replaced by a composite measure of the food environment which includes food insecurity and access to healthy foods.

**WHAT DOES THIS INDICATOR MEASURE?**

Consider alternative indicator: Food Environment Index - Proximity to healthy foods and income

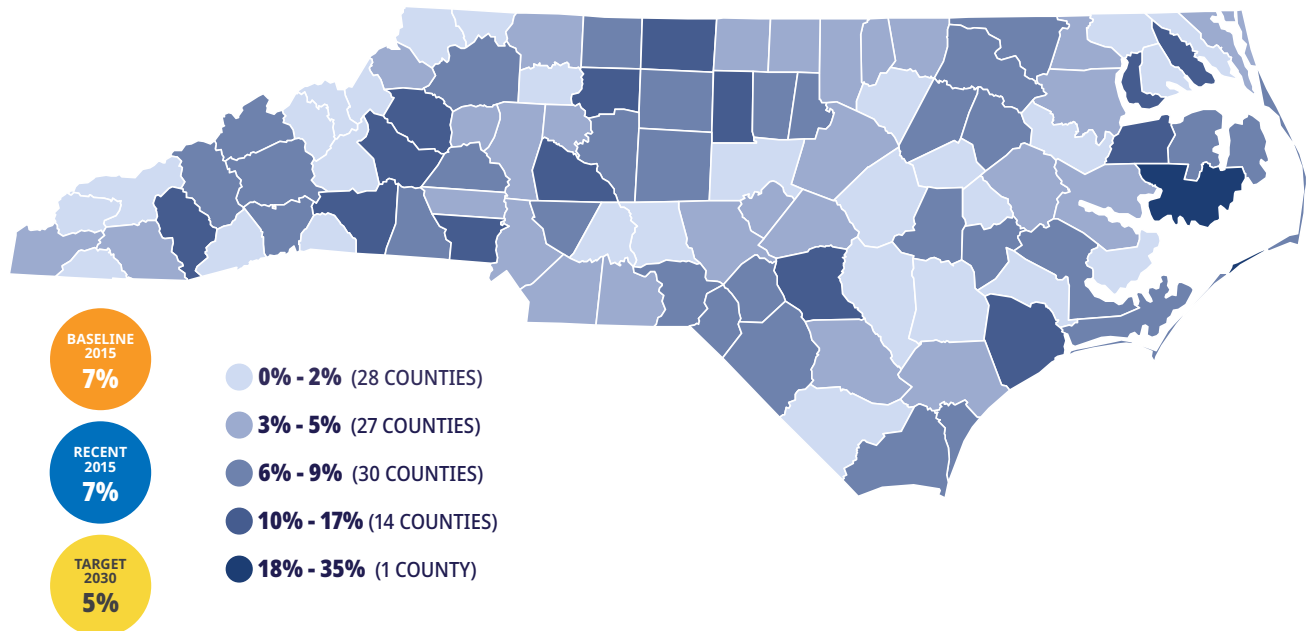
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/measures-data-sources/county-health-rankings-model/health-factors/health-behaviors/diet-exercise/food-environment-index>

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2021/measure/factors/133/data>

- Limited Access to Healthy Foods (2015 data)
- Food Insecurity (2018 data)

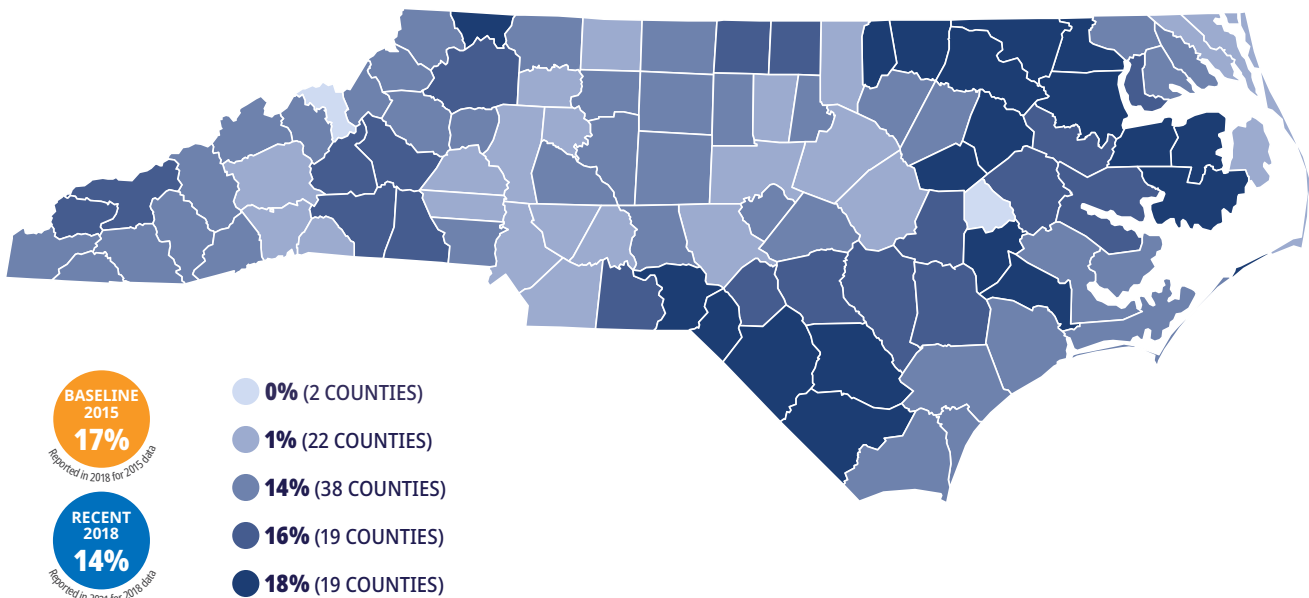
## CURRENT DATA TRENDED OVER TIME

Figure 35. Percent of people with limited access to healthy foods (2021)



Data Source: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2021/measure/factors/133/data>

Figure 36. Percent of people with food insecurity (2021)



Data Source: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2021/measure/factors/133/data>

## THE STORY BEHIND THE CURVE

- There are barriers to, and disparities in, the accessibility and availability of foods that support healthy eating patterns. Data from 2012—2013 show that the average distance from U.S. households to the nearest supermarket was 2.19 miles. Individuals without a vehicle or access to convenient public transportation, or who do not have food venues with healthy choices within walking distance, have limited access to foods that support healthy eating patterns.
- Transportation and distance to sources of healthy foods impact low-income and rural communities, especially older adults living in rural communities. Overall, for those who do not have access to a car or public transportation, the cost of travel time to find healthier options in addition to out-of-pocket expenses may be too high.
- Another barrier to accessibility of healthy food choices is living in a food desert. In food deserts, food sources are lacking or limited, particularly in low-income areas that are more also likely to have a higher share of convenience stores and small food markets. These options tend to carry foods of lower nutritional quality compared to large chain supermarkets, which may have a wider variety of healthy options.
- Improving access to foods that support healthy eating patterns is one method for addressing health disparities and population health. Several strategies that aim to “improve diet by altering food environments” are being considered and implemented.
- For example, a study has shown that a small financial incentive increased the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in participating farmers markets – resulting in increased access to healthy foods.
- Several strategies have also been proposed to encourage more equitable access to healthy food choices, such as, “attracting and opening supermarkets in underserved neighborhoods, selling healthy foods at reduced prices, and limiting the total number of per capita fast-food restaurants in a community.”

*Source: Healthy People 2030 11-20*

## WHAT OTHER DATA DO WE NEED?

- Access to locally grown food
- Availability of public transportation
- Individuals over 65 who are living below the poverty level
- Number/percentage of children receiving free/reduced school meals
- Percentage of people unemployed
- Referrals for food assistance through NCCARE360

## WHAT COULD WORK TO TURN THE CURVE?

- Continue, expand, and institutionalize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) online purchasing pilot
- Enhance how children and families access programs supporting their well-being, including SNAP, WIC, CACFP, Medicaid, NCCARE360 through better data and analysis, infrastructure, and integration
- Establish a public-private fund for stimulating the development/renovation/expansion of new and existing community-supported venues
- Expand transit options in rural and low-income communities
- Implement competitive pricing for healthy foods
- Implement healthy food procurement and food served policies in public and private organizations and businesses
- Implement school breakfast programs and school fruit and vegetable gardens
- Include healthy foods in convenience stores and food pantries
- Provide additional funding and support to School Nutrition Programs to expand healthy, locally sourced food options and reduce financial barriers for students
- Provide financial incentives such as “Double Up Food Bucks” for SNAP/FNS recipients for purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables from grocery stores and farmers markets
- Support equitable, food-oriented development that drives economic growth in low-income and historically marginalized communities
- Support farmers’ efforts to maintain active crop production in areas with high land prices
- Support farmers’ markets and enable Electronic Benefit Transfer payment at farmers’ markets
- Support regional food hubs in adopting solid business models, with built-in reliance on subject matter experts



## RECOMMENDED READING/LISTENING

Casey, A., Pylypiw, N. (2022). Running the numbers: Measuring food hardship in North Carolina communities. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, 83(2), 126–129. <https://doi.org/10.18043/ncm.83.2.126>

Phillips, K.U. (2022). Achieving Healthy NC 2030 goals: Physical environment. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, 83(2), 121-123. <https://doi.org/10.18043/ncm.83.2.121>

North Carolina Healthy Food Retail Task Force. (2019). Supporting Healthy Food Access in North Carolina. Retrieved on March 2, 2022 from [ncreportfinal.original.pdf](https://ncreportfinal.original.pdf) (thefoodtrust.org)

## NC PARTNERS WHO CAN HELP US

PARTNER/POTENTIAL PARTNER	WEBSITE LINK
American Heart Association	<a href="https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/fighting-food-insecurity">https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/fighting-food-insecurity</a>
BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation	<a href="https://www.bcbsncfoundation.org/">https://www.bcbsncfoundation.org/</a>
Carteret Local Food Network (CLFN)	<a href="https://www.carteretlocalfoodnetwork.org/">https://www.carteretlocalfoodnetwork.org/</a>
Center for Environmental Farming Systems	<a href="https://cefs.ncsu.edu/food-system-initiatives/local-food-economies/infrastructure-map/">https://cefs.ncsu.edu/food-system-initiatives/local-food-economies/infrastructure-map/</a>
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	<a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp">https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp</a>
Community Food Strategies	<a href="https://communityfoodstrategies.org/">https://communityfoodstrategies.org/</a>
Communities In Partnership	<a href="https://communitiesinpartnership.org/">https://communitiesinpartnership.org/</a>
Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center	<a href="https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/research">https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/research</a>
Durham's Innovative Nutrition Education (DINE)- North Carolina State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)	<a href="https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/state-snap-ed-programs/north-carolina">https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/state-snap-ed-programs/north-carolina</a> <a href="https://www.dcopublichealth.org/services/nutrition/dine">https://www.dcopublichealth.org/services/nutrition/dine</a>
Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)	<a href="https://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/fmarket.htm">https://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/fmarket.htm</a>
Feast Down East	<a href="https://www.feastdowneast.org/">https://www.feastdowneast.org/</a>
Feeding the Carolinas	<a href="https://feedingthecarolinas.org/">https://feedingthecarolinas.org/</a>
Green Rural Redevelopment Organization (GRRO)	<a href="https://www.conservationfund.org/projects/green-rural-redevelopment-organization">https://www.conservationfund.org/projects/green-rural-redevelopment-organization</a>
Guilford College Mobile Oasis Farmers Market	<a href="https://guilfordmobileoasis.com/">https://guilfordmobileoasis.com/</a>
Inter-Faith Food Shuttle	<a href="https://www.foodshuttle.org/">https://www.foodshuttle.org/</a>
Meals on Wheels North Carolina	<a href="https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/about-membership/state-associations/north-carolina">https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/about-membership/state-associations/north-carolina</a>
NC Council of Churches	<a href="https://www.ncchurches.org/">https://www.ncchurches.org/</a>
NC State Cooperative Extension	<a href="https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/categories/agriculture-food/local-foods/">https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/categories/agriculture-food/local-foods/</a>
NC State University Institute for Emerging Issues	<a href="https://iei.ncsu.edu/">https://iei.ncsu.edu/</a>
North Carolina Alliance for Health (NCAH)	<a href="https://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/healthy-food-access/">https://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/healthy-food-access/</a>
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	<a href="http://www.ncagr.gov/">http://www.ncagr.gov/</a>
North Carolina Local Food Council (NCLFC)	<a href="https://www.nclocalfoodcouncil.org/">https://www.nclocalfoodcouncil.org/</a>
Reinvestment Partners	<a href="https://reinvestmentpartners.org/">https://reinvestmentpartners.org/</a>
Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)- USDA Food and Nutrition Service	<a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program">https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program</a>
The Corner Farmers Market/The Grove Street People's Market Green for Greens Fund	<a href="https://green4greens.org/markets/">https://green4greens.org/markets/</a>
The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina	<a href="https://foodbankcenc.org/">https://foodbankcenc.org/</a>
UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	<a href="https://hpd.unc.edu/research/healthy-food-access/">https://hpd.unc.edu/research/healthy-food-access/</a>